A Letter from Mr William Nicolſon, *to the Reverend Mr* Walker, Maſter *of* Univerſity Coll: *in* Oxford; *concerning a* Runic Inſcription *at* Beaucaſtle.

'TIS now high time to make good my promiſe of giving you a more perfect Account of our two *Runic* Inſcriptions at *Beau-Caſtle* and *Bridekirk*. The former is fallen into ſuch an untoward part of our Country, and ſo far out of the common Road, that I could not much ſooner have either an opportunity, or the Courage to look after it. I was aſſur'd by the Curate of the place, (a Perſon of good ſence & Learning in greater matters,) that the Characters were ſo miſerably worn out ſince the Lord *William Howard*'s time, (by whom they were communicated to Sr *H. Spelman*, & mentioned by *Wormius*, *Mon. Dan.* p. 161,) that they were now wholly defaced, and nothing to be met with worth my while. The former part of this Relation I found to be true: for (tho' it appears that the forementioned Inſcription has bin much larger then *Wormius* has given it, yet) 'tis at preſent ſo far loſt, that, in ſix or ſeven lines, none of the Characters are fairly diſcernable, ſave only ᚢᚹᛏᚻR; and theſe too are incoherent, and at great diſtance from each other. However, this *Epyſtilium Crucis* (as Sr *H. Spelman*, in his Letter to *Wormius*, has called it,) is to this day a noble Monument; and highly merits the View of a Curious Antiquary. The beſt account, Sr, I am able to give you of it, be p'eaſed to take as follows.

'Tis one entire Free-Stone of about five yards in height; waſhed over (as the Font at *Bridekirk*,) with a white oyly Cement, to preſerve it the better from the injuries

of time and weather. The figure of it inclines to a ſquare Pyramid; each ſide whereof is near two foot broad at the bottom, but upwards more tapering. On the Weſt ſide of the Stone, we have three fair Draughts, which evidently enough manifeſt the Monument to be Chriſtian. The Loweſt of theſe repreſents the Pourtraicture of a Layman; with an Hawk, or Eagle, perch'd on his Arm. Over his head are the forementioned ruines of the Lord *Howard*'s Inſcription. Next to theſe, the Picture of ſome Apoſtle, Saint, or other Holy man, in a ſacerdotal Habit, with a Glory round his Head. On the top ſtands the Effigies of the B. V. with the Babe in her Arms; and both their Heads encircled with Glories as before.

On the North we have a great deal of Checquer-work; ſubſcribed with the following Characters, fairly legible.

ᚼᛁᚢᛏᛏBᚢᚱᚢ ᛝᚼ

Upon the firſt ſight of theſe Letters, I greedily ventured to read them *Rynburu*: and was wonderfully pleaſed to fancy, that this word thus ſingly written, muſt neceſſarily betoken the final extirpation and *Burial* of the Magical *Runæ* in theſe parts, reaſonably hoped for, upon the Converſion of the *Danes* to the Chriſtian Faith. For, that the *Danes* were antiently, as well as ſome of the *Laplanders* at preſent, groſs Idolaters and Sorcerers, is beyond Controverſy; and I could not but remember, that all our Hiſtorians tell us, that they brought their Paganiſm along with them into this Kingdome. And therefore 'twas not very difficult to imagine that they might for ſome time practiſe their *Hocus* tricks here in the North; where they were moſt numerous and leaſt diſturbed. This conceit was the more heightened, by reflecting upon the natural ſuperſtition of our Borderers at this day; who are much better acquainted with, and do more

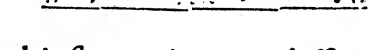
more firmly believe, their old Legendary ſtories of *Fayries* and Witches, then the Articles of their Creed. And to convince me yet further that they are not utter ſtrangers to the *Black Arts* of their forefathers, I accidentally met with a Gentleman in the neighbourhood, who ſhewed me a Book of Spells and Magical Receipts, taken (two or three days before) in the pocket of one of our *Moſs-Troopers*: wherein, among many other conjuring Feats, was preſcribed a certain Remedy for an Ague, by applying a few barbarous Characters to the Body of the party diſtempered. Theſe, methought, were very near akin to *Wormius*'s RAMRUNER; which, he ſays, differed wholly in figure and ſhape from the common *Runæ*. For, though he tells us, that theſe *Ramruner* were ſo called, *Eo quod Moleſtias, dolores, morboſque hiſce infligere inimicis ſoliti ſint Magi*; yet his great friend *Arng: Jonas*, more to our purpoſe, ſays *that--His etiam uſi ſunt ad benefaciendum, juvandum, Medicandum tam animi quam Corporis morbis; atque ad ipſos Cacodæmones pellendos & fugandos.* I ſhall not trouble you with a draught of this Spell; becauſe I have not yet had an opportunity of learning, whether it may not be an ordinary one, and to be met with (among others of the ſame nature) in *Paracelſus* or *Cornelius Agrippa*.

If this conjecture be not allowable; I have, S^r, one more which (it may be) you will think more plauſible then the former. For if, inſtead of making the third and fourth Letters to be two ᚴ. ᚴ. ᚺ. ᚺ. we ſhould ſuppoſe them to be ᛏ. ᛏ. E. E. the word will then be *Ryeeburu*; which I take to ſignify, in the old *Daniſh* Language, *Cœmiterium* or *Cadaverum Sepulchrum*. For, tho the true old *Runic* word for *Cadaver* be uſually written ᚼᚱᚨᛏ *Hrae*; yet the *H* may, without any violence to the Orthography of that tongue, be omitted at pleaſure; and then the difference of ſpelling the word, here at *Beaucaſtle*, and on ſome of the ragged Monuments in *Denmark*, will not

be great. And for the countenancing of this latter Reading, I think the above mentioned *Checquer work* may be very available: ſince in that we have a notable Emblem of the *Tumuli*, or burying places of the Antients. (Not to mention the early cuſtome of erecting Croſſes and Crucifixes in Church-yards: which perhaps, being well weighed, might prove another encouragement to this ſecond Reading.) I know the Checquer to be the Arms of the *Vaux's*, or *De Vallibus*, the old Proprietours of this part of the North; but that, I preſume, will make nothing for our turn. Becauſe this & the other carved work on the Croſs, muſt of neceſſity be allow'd, to bear a more antient date then any of the Remains of that Name and Family; which cannot be run up higher then the Conqueſt.

On the Eaſt we have nothing but a few Flouriſhes, Draughts of Birds, Grapes and other Fruits: all which I take to be no more then the Statuary's Fancy.

On the South, Flouriſhes and conceits, as before, and towards the bottom, the following decay'd Inſcription.



The Defects in this ſhort piece are ſufficient to diſcourage me from attempting to expound it. But (poſſibly) it may be read thus.

Gag Ubbo Erlat, i. e.

Latrones Ubbo Vicit.

I confeſs this has no Affinity (at leaſt, being thus interpreted) with the foregoing Inſcription: but may well enough ſuit with the manners of both antient and modern Inhabitants of this Town and Country.

Upon your pardon and Correction, S^r^, of the Impertinencies and Miſtakes in this, which I ſhall humbly hope for)

for,) I ſhall trouble you with my further obſervations on the Font at *Bridekirk*; and to all your other Commands ſhall pay that ready obedience which becomes,

S^r,

Carlile, *Your moſt obliged and*
Nov. 2. *Faithfull Servant*
1685. WILL. NICOLSON.

A Letter from Mr Nicolſon *to S^r* W^m. Dugdale; *concerning a* Runic Inſcription *on the* Font *at* Bridekirk.

Hon^d. S^r, *Carlile;* Nov. 23, 1685.

MY Worthy and good Lord, our Biſhop, was lately pleaſed to acquaint me, that you were deſirous to have my thoughts of the Inſcription on the Font at *Bridekirk* in this County. I am, S^r, extremely conſcious of the raſhneſs of bringing any thing of mine to the view of ſo diſcerning an Antiquary; but, withal, very tender of diſobeying ſo great and worthy a Perſon. I know you were pleaſed to make your own obſervations upon it, in your Viſitation of theſe parts, when *Norroy*: and I ſhall hope that you will give me an opportunity of rectifying, by yours, my following conjectures.

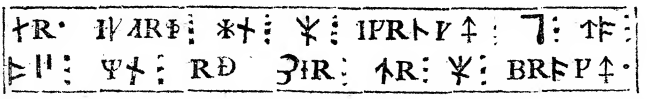
1. The Fabrick of this Monument does, I think, fairly enough evince that 'tis Chriſtian; and that it is now uſed to the ſame purpoſe for which it 'twas at firſt deſigned. M^r *Cambden* (tho' not acquainted with the Characters of the Inſcription, yet) ſeems to fancy thus much: and, for

proof of his opinion, brings a notable Quotation out of S^t *Paulinus*'s Epiſtles. But he needed not to have ſent us ſo far off for a Voucher; if he had taken good notice of the Imagery on the Eaſt ſide of this ſtone; as I doubt not, S^r, but you have done. We have there, fairly repreſented, a perſon in a long Sacerdotal Habit dipping a Child into the water; and a Dove (the Embleme, no doubt, of the *H. Ghoſt*,) hovering over the Infant. Now, S^r, I need not acquaint you, that the Sacrament of Baptiſm was antiently adminiſtered by plunging into the water, in the Weſtern as well as Eaſtern parts of the Church; and that the *Gothic* word ΑΛΠΙΓΑΝ (*Mar*, 1. 8. And *Luc.* 3. 7. and 12.) the *German* word taufen, the *Daniſh* Døbe, and the *Belgic* doopen, doe as clearly make out that practiſe, as the *Greek* word Βαπτίζω: Nor, that they may all ſeem to be deriv'd from [Βάπτειν] another word of the ſame Language and ſignification; and are evidently akin to our *Engliſh* Dip, Deep, and Depth. Indeed our *Saxon* Anceſtors expreſſed the Action of Baptiſm by a word of a different Import from the reſt. For, in the forementioned place of S^t *Mark's* Goſpell, their Tranſlation has the Text thus: Ic eop pullıȝe on pætepe. he eop pullaþ on halȝum ȝaſte ȝ i. e. *Ego vos aquis Baptizo*; *ille vos Spiritu Sancto Baptizabit.* Where the word pullian or pullıȝean ſignifies only ſimply *Lavare*: whence the *Latin* word *Fullo*, and our *Fuller* have their Original. But from hence to conclude that the *Saxons* did not uſe dipping in the Sacrament of Baptiſm, is ſomewhat too harſh an Argument.

2. There are other Draughts on the North and Weſt ſide of the Font, which may very probably make for our purpoſe: but with theſe (as not thoroughly underſtanding them, and having not had an opportunity of getting them drawn in paper) I ſhall not trouble you at preſent.

3. On

3. On the South ſide of the ſtone we have the Inſcription; which I have taken care accurately to write out. And 'tis as follows:



Now, theſe kind of Characters are well enough known, (ſince *Ol. Wormius*'s great Induſtry in making us acquainted with the *Literatura Runica*), to have bin chiefly uſed by the *Pagan* Inhabitants of *Denmark*, *Sweden*, and the other Northern Kingdomes; and the *Danes* are ſaid to have ſwarmed moſtly in theſe parts of our *Iſland*. Which two conſiderations ſeem weighty enough to perſwade any man, at firſt ſight, to conclude that the Font is a *Daniſh* Monument. But then on the other hand, we are ſufficiently aſſured, that the Heathen *Saxons* did alſo make uſe of theſe *Runæ*; as is plainly evident from the frequent mention of Runcpæptizen and Runptapar in many of the Monuments of that Nation, both in Print and Manuſcript ſtill to be met with. Beſides, we muſt not forget that both *Danes* and *Saxons* are indebted to this Kingdom for this Chriſtianity: and therefore thus far, their pretenſions to a *Runic* (Chriſtian) Monument may be thought equal. Indeed ſome of the Letters (as Ð, ȝ and ⅂) ſeem purely *Saxon*; being not to be met with among *Wormius*'s many Alphabets: and the words themſelves (if I miſtake them not) come nearer to the Antient *Saxon* Dialect, then the *Daniſh*. However, let the Inſcription ſpeak for it ſelf: and I queſtion not but 'twill convince any competent and judicious Reader that 'tis *Daniſh*. Thus therefore I have ventured to read and explain it:

Er Ekard han men egrocten. and to dis men red wer Taner men brogten. i. e.

Here *Ekard* was converted; and to this Mans Example were the *Danes* brought. There

There are only two things in the Inſcription (thus Interpreted) that will need an Explanation.

1. Who this *Ekard* was? And this is indeed a Queſtion of that Difficulty, that I confeſs, I am not able exactly to anſwer it. The proper name it ſelf is ordinary enough in the Northern Hiſtories; though Variouſly written: As, *Echardus*, *Echinardus*, *Eginardus*, *Ecardus*, and *Eckhardus*. 'Tis certainly a name of Valour, as all others of the like Termination; ſuch as, *Bernhard*, *Everhard*, *Gothard*, *Reinhard*, &c. So that, it may well become a General, or other great officer in the *Daniſh* Army: and ſuch we have juſt reaſon to believe him to have been, who is here drawn into an example for the reſt of his Countreymen. Our Hiſtorians are not very particular in their accounts of the ſeveral Incurſions and Victories of the *Danes*; and their own writers much more imperfect: and therefore, in caſes of this nature, we muſt content our ſelves with probable conjectures.

2. *Han men egrotten*; which, rendered *Verbatim*, is *Have men turn'd*, i. e. was turn'd. A phraſe, to this day, very familiar in moſt dialects of the antient *Celtic* tongue; though loſt in our *Engliſh*. In the High-*Dutch* 'tis eſpecially obvious; as, *Man Saget*, *Man hat geſagt*, *Man lobet*, &c. And the *French* Impersonals (*On dit*, *On fait*, &c.) are of the ſame ſtrain; and evident Arguments that the *Teutonic* and *Gauliſh* Tongues were antiently near akin.

The Characters ↕ ᛏ and ᛉ are manifeſt Abbreviations of ſeveral Letters into one: of which ſort we have great variety of examples in ſeveral of *Wormius*'s Books: And ſuch I take the Letter Ꝺ to be, inſtead of ꝺ and ꝑ; and not the *Saxon* Ð. I muſt believe ⅂ to be borrowed from the *Saxons*: and Ⅎ I take to be a corruption of their ƿ or W. The reſt has little of Difficulty in it. Only the Language of the whole ſeems a mixture of the

the *Daniſh* and *Saxon* tongues: but that can be no other then the natural effect of the two Nations being jumbled together in this part of the World. Our Borderers, to this day, ſpeak a Leaſh of Languages (*Britiſh*, *Saxon*, and *Daniſh*) in one; and 'tis hard to determine, which of thoſe three nations has the greateſt ſhare in the Motly Breed.

S^r^,

Your, &c. W. N.

An account of the Latitude of Conſtantinople, *and* Rhodes, *Written by the Learned* M^r^ John Greaves, *ſometime Profeſſor of Aſtronomy in the Univerſity of* Oxford, *and directed to the moſt Reverend* James Uſſher, Arch-Biſhop *of* Armagh.

UPON Intimation of your *Grace's* deſires, and upon importunity of ſome Learned Men, having finiſhed a Table, as a key to your *Grace's* exquiſite diſquiſition, touching *Aſia* properly ſo called; I thought my ſelf obliged to give both you and them a reaſon, why in the ſituation of *Byzantium*, and the *Iſland Rhodus*, (which two eminent places I have made the σφραγιδα and bounds of the Chart,) I diſſent from the traditions of the Antients, and from the Tables of our late and beſt Geographers, and conſequently diſſenting in theſe, have been neceſſitated to alter the Latitudes, if not Longitudes, of moſt of the remarkable City's of this diſcourſe. And firſt for *Byzantium*, the received Latitude